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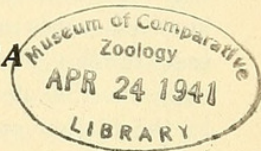
OTTAWA, CANADA, APRIL, 1941

No. 4

35,343

## NOTES ON BIRD-LIFE OF CHURCHILL, MANITOBA

By LAWRENCE I. GRINNELL and RALPH S. PALMER



FROM June 2 to July 23, 1940, the writers had occasion to visit Churchill, Manitoba, for the purpose of studying and photographing birds there.

On our arrival many species of birds were already present in abundance and were in full song. The Churchill River was still frozen solid, but the ice went out the fourth day of June. Temperatures recorded at the Radio Station in Churchill reached freezing point or colder during seven of the nights between June 2 and 15 and, for the same period, ranged from a minimum of 27° Fahr. to a maximum of 64°. The weather for the first half of June averaged fairer than for the latter half, when heavy clouds and rain occurred almost continually for twelve out of fifteen days, the temperature ranging from 31° to 64°. During our stay for the first twenty-two days of July, fair weather prevailed mostly for all except three days with temperatures ranging from a minimum of 43° to a maximum of 77°.

The area observed consisted of the peninsula at Fort Prince of Wales, on the east side of the mouth of Churchill River to about six miles southeasterly toward the Gravel Pit and bounded by Hudson Bay and Churchill River. Observation also included a day's trip made to the peninsula on the west side of the river, ending in Fort Churchill. Owing to our having to devote part time to life history studies, the territory covered was chiefly confined to a radius of one mile of the two cabins where we stayed, two miles southeast of the town on the narrow-gauge railway.

So far as we are aware, there are included in our annotated list all the birds recorded from the Churchill area since the extensive and excellent account of the birds of the region by Taverner and Sutton appeared in 1934. A number of species have been added to the recorded list by F. L. Farley and F. M. Baumgartner

since that paper appeared. Dr. A. A. Allen visited Churchill in 1934. Through his courtesy we are able to add a few notes of his, including records of two birds hitherto unrecorded from that area. Added to these are a few species first seen by us. We are including these various records in order to make this report supplementary to the Taverner and Sutton paper. The names of the fifteen species or subspecies included here, but not reported from Churchill by Taverner and Sutton, are preceded by an asterisk in the annotated list.

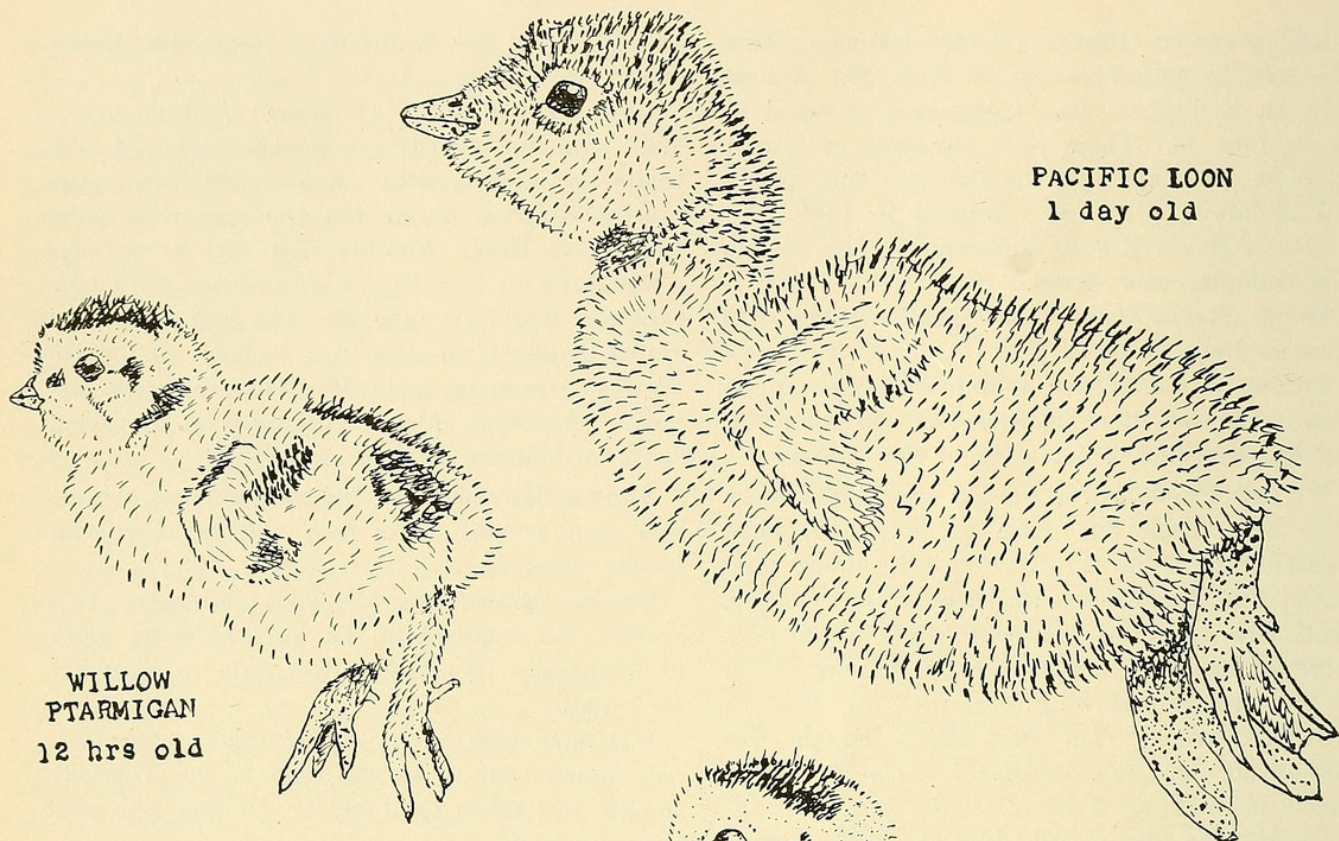
Pen sketches of the downy young of ten species of birds, redrawn from water color portraits made at Churchill by the junior author, are here reproduced. All are drawn to the same scale. While such drawings give some idea of relative size, general markings and characteristic postures, they give no idea of the beautiful salt-and-pepper pattern of such young birds as Least, Semipalmated and Red-backed Sandpipers. Nor can one see the golden color of a young Northern Phalarope or the sulphur yellow of a young Hudsonian Curlew. The birds were drawn from life and their ages accurately known in most cases. A minus sign (meaning *less*) or a plus and minus sign (meaning *more or less*) is placed before the stated age of the specimens figured when there was any question about this point.

The bibliography at the end of this paper brings together a number of Churchill items. This may be convenient for future workers. We have not included the many Tree Sparrow papers by Marguerite Heydweiller Baumgartner, published in various journals, some of which deal at length with work done in the Churchill area.

## ANNOTATED LIST

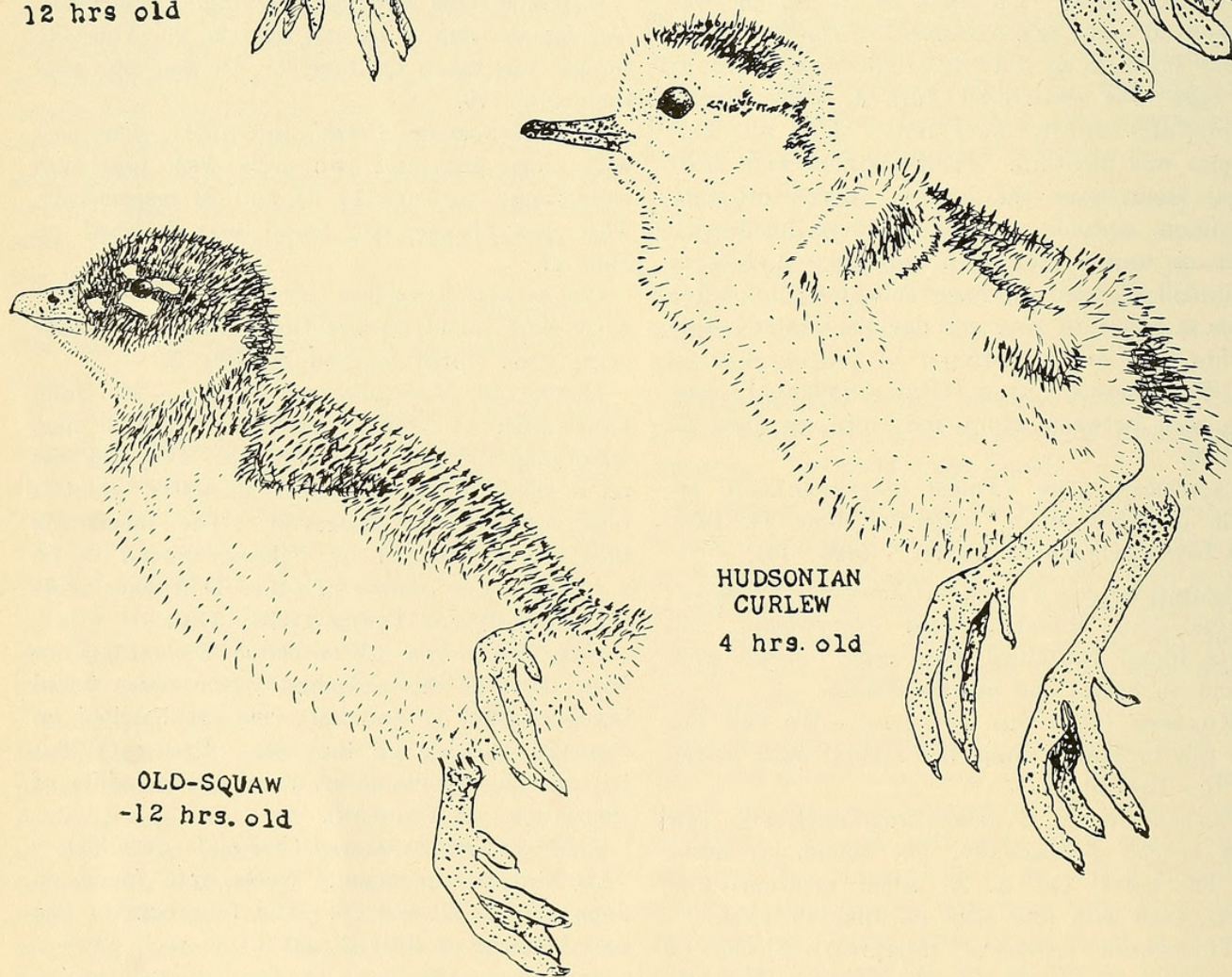
PACIFIC LOON (*Gavia arctica*).— A pair was seen in the Reservoir on our first trip there on June 3. On June 15 a nest with two eggs





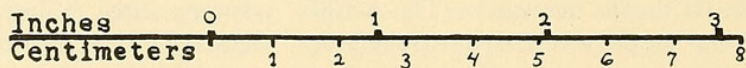
PACIFIC LOON  
1 day old

WILLOW  
PTARMIGAN  
12 hrs old

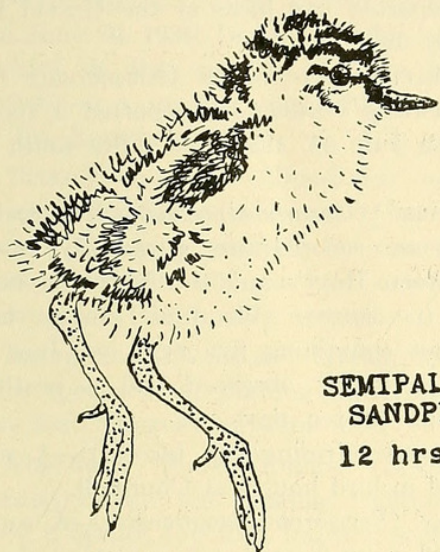


HUDSONIAN  
CURLEW  
4 hrs. old

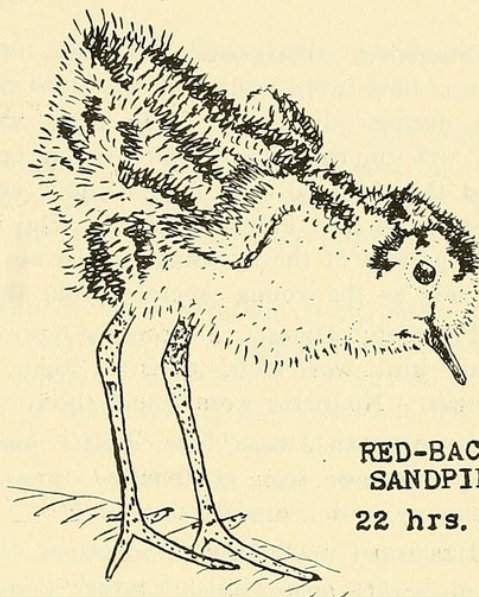
OLD-SQUAW  
-12 hrs. old



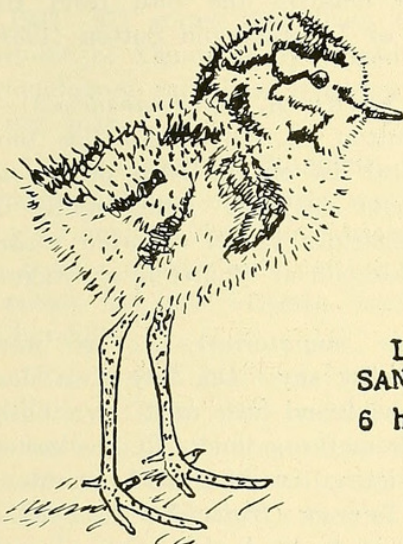




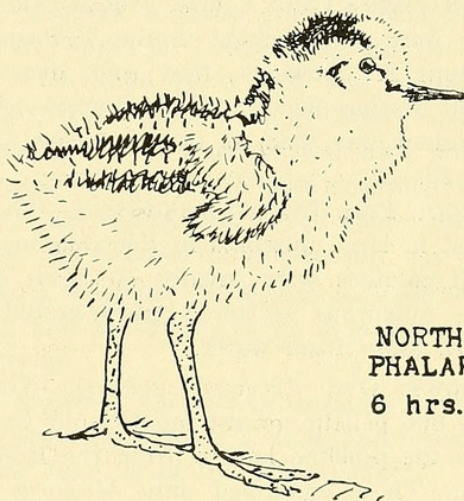
SEMIPALMATED  
SANDPIPER  
12 hrs. old



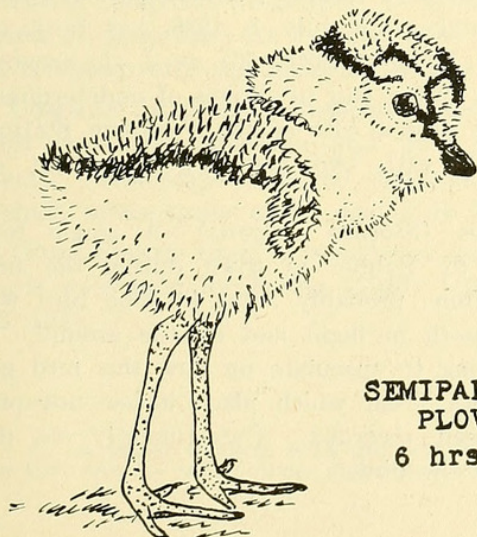
RED-BACKED  
SANDPIPER  
22 hrs. old



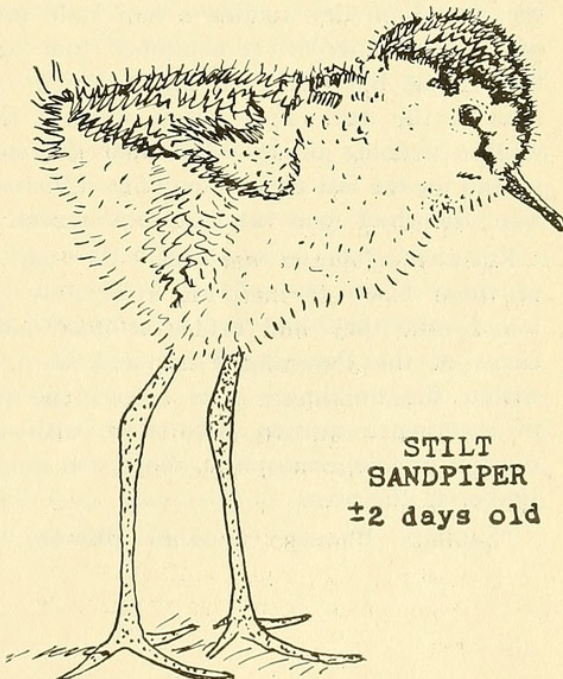
LEAST  
SANDPIPER  
6 hrs. old



NORTHERN  
PHALAROPE  
6 hrs. old



SEMIPALMATED  
PLOVER  
6 hrs. old



STILT  
SANDPIPER  
±2 days old



**NORTHERN PHALAROPE** (*Lobipes lobatus*).—These birds were numerous when we arrived and all during our stay. Three nests were found on wet tundra. Two were located on June 17 and the third on July 8. The four eggs of the last found nest hatched July 9. The male only was present at the hatching and he ate the shells as fast as the young emerged from them.

**PARASITIC JAEGER** (*Stercorarius parasiticus*).—This bird was more plentiful than the next species. No nests were found, however.

**LONG-TAILED JAEGER** (*Stercorarius longicaudus*).—A few were seen at different times, often in company with Parasitic Jaegers.

**HERRING GULL** (*Larus argentatus*).—This common species nested inland rather than near the Bay in the vicinity of Churchill. Eggs removed from a nest on a rock in a pond were found to have been replaced by a second clutch on June 27.

**BONAPARTE'S GULL** (*Larus philadelphia*).—These birds were still flocking in the Townsite slough on June 2. However, they soon dispersed and sought nesting places in forested areas. A juvenal individual was seen at the Townsite slough on July 22.

**ARCTIC TERN** (*Sterna paradisaea*).—This species nested in large numbers in the area we covered. Small colonies were usually on islets in ponds, while numerous scattered pairs nested on dry tundra away from water.

**SNOWY OWL** (*Nyctea nyctea*).—None were seen, but pellets several months old were found along the pipeline leading from the Reservoir to town. These contained only *Microtus* and *Dicrostonyx* remains.

**SHORT-EARED OWL** (*Asio flammeus*).—This species was seen frequently from July 2 on. A nest was found on dry tundra a half mile northeast of camp on July 5. It contained four eggs and two young, but either an egg or chick vanished later in the day. Five owlets were in the nest on the evening of July 22 when the spot was visited for the last time. Lemmings (*Dicrostonyx*) were the chief food brought to the nest.

**FLICKER** (*Colaptes auratus*).—We saw a pair of these birds at intervals after July 14 and found that they had drilled a hole under the eaves of the Pumping Plant and were nesting within the building. This solved the problem of securing a nesting site, since, with the exception of telephone poles, there was no sizeable timber in the area.

\***EASTERN PHOEBE** (*Sayornis phoebe*).—Farley

(1939: 56) reported two birds at the Gravel Pit in late June, 1938.

\***YELLOW-BELLIED FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonax flaviventris*).—Farley (1940a: 14) reported a specimen taken on July 15, 1939, five miles south of Churchill.

**HORNED LARK** (*Otocoris alpestris*).—The specimens which we secured are apparently intermediate between Hoyt's and the Northern race, but nearer the latter. We found many lark nests, the first containing five eggs, on June 4. One brood of young observed had a nestling period of nine to ten days.

**TREE SWALLOW** (*Iridoprocne bicolor*).—A pair or two nested in bird houses at Churchill.

**CANADA JAY** (*Perisoreus canadensis*).—A sooty immature bird was collected on the plateau above the Gravel Pit on June 28.

\***BLUE JAY** (*Cyanocitta cristata*).—An adult was seen by Palmer on June 19 just east of the Reservoir. This removes the bird from the hypothetical list of Taverner and Sutton (1934: 64).

\***RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH** (*Sitta canadensis*).—Taverner and Sutton (p. 66) placed this bird in the hypothetical list on the basis of an old record from about fifty-five miles south of Churchill. Baumgartner (1936) reported seeing one near Lake Isabelle at Churchill on August 4, 1934.

**ROBIN** (*Turdus migratorius*).—Robins were common but notably shy. On July 8, a nest with four eggs was found near camp in a bush, about four feet from the ground. Robins nested in June on the high rafters of a shed in town.

**GRAY-CHEEKED THRUSH** (*Hylocichla minima*).—A few were seen in forested places.

**AMERICAN PIPIT** (*Anthus spinoletta*).—This species was seen regularly on the rocks near the Bay, but no evidence of nesting was found.

\***WHITE-RUMPED SHRIKE** (*Lanius ludovicianus*).—A bird taken on July 1, 1938, has been recorded by Farley (1939: 56) as *L. l. excubitorides*. In 1940 a pair of shrikes of undetermined sub-species nested east of the Pumping Station. Two adults with two young were present on July 12.

\***STARLING** (*Sturnus vulgaris*).—A single bird was seen by Palmer in town during the first week in June, probably June 4. The bird was observed both in flight and on the ground. It is interesting to speculate on how this bird got to Churchill, from which place it has not previously been recorded. Unfortunately we did not collect the bird.



\*PHILADELPHIA VIREO (*Vireo philadelphicus*).—On June 29, 1934, Dr. A. A. Allen saw and heard a bird of this species. It was in a shrubby growth in a marshy area within a quarter mile of the Reservoir.

YELLOW WARBLER (*Dendroica aestiva*).—This species was fairly common. One was seen on July 7, hopping around the ruined interior of Fort Churchill, while a pair nested in a bush near one of the houses in town.

BLACK-POLL WARBLER (*Dendroica striata*).—This species was common in forested areas. It was first observed on June 9.

NORTHERN WATER-THRUSH (*Seiurus noveboracensis*).—One was singing vigorously on June 9 on a spruce top in a forested section.

ENGLISH SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*).—We did not look for these birds on our arrival, but saw a number of them about the grain elevator, during the latter part of our stay. Weaver (1939: 97) states that these birds survive the winter at Churchill by inhabiting the railroad roundhouse and there receiving food and shelter from man.

\*YELLOW-HEADED BLACKBIRD (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*).—A male was clearly observed by Grinnell to rise from a marsh at the edge of a pond a quarter mile north of our camp. This species has not hitherto been recorded from Churchill.

\*RED-WINGED BLACKBIRD (*Agelaius phoeniceus*).—Farley (1938: 119) reported that Wilk saw a male at Churchill on June 21, 1937, and two males on July 6 of that year. Also see Farley (1939: 57). We saw a bird of this species near the Townsite slough on June 14, 1940.

RUSTY BLACKBIRD (*Euphagus carolinus*).—This species was common about the ponds near the Reservoir.

HOARY REDPOLL (*Acanthis hornemanni*).—We found *A. h. exilipes* far less common, but usually in company with the following species.

COMMON REDPOLL (*Acanthis linaria*).<sup>1</sup>—This bird was quite common and nine nests were found. Hatchings occurred between June 12 (which seems quite early) and July 21.

\*PINE SISKIN (*Spinus pinus*).—A pair of these birds were seen by Farley (1938: 119) on June 16, 1937.

SAVANNAH SPARROW (*Passerculus sandwichensis*).—This bird was common.

TREE SPARROW (*Spizella arborea*).—This species was abundant. On July 8, northeast of the Reservoir, a nest containing four young was found on the ground and partly protected by a spruce.

\*CHIPPING SPARROW (*Spizella passerina*).—Farley (1940a: 14) reported a singing male collected by Wilk, north of the Gravel Pit, on July 14, 1939, as *S. p. passerina*. A specimen collected by Baumgartner (1936) near Lake Isabelle on July 11, 1934, was referred to the western race, *arizonae*, by Mr. James Peters.

HARRIS'S SPARROW (*Zonotrichia querula*).—A few were seen among the spruces. On July 9, the excited calls of a pair of adults attracted our attention to a young bird which had left its nest and was hidden under dense spruce boughs.

WHITE-CROWNED SPARROW (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*).—We found *Z. l. leucophrys* to be quite common. On June 14, a nest was located on the ground, close under a rocky ridge, near the Radio Station. *Z. l. gambeli* was also present. We collected specimens of both so-called races. The latter has a pink bill, which shows up well in one of our Kodachrome pictures.

LINCOLN'S SPARROW (*Melospiza lincolni*).—Two were seen and heard singing on June 11, east of the Reservoir.

\*SONG SPARROW (*Melospiza melodia*).—Dr. A. A. Allen saw one on June 8, 1934, and heard one singing on June 22 of the same year.

SWAMP SPARROW (*Melospiza georgiana*).—Two were singing near camp on June 10.

LAPLAND LONGSPUR (*Calcarius lapponicus*).—This species was abundant and omnipresent on the tundra. We fed them in front of the camp. Of the four nests found, the earliest was located on June 17.

SMITH'S LONGSPUR (*Calcarius pictus*).—These birds were less numerous than the above species. We found no nests. Their song was heard regularly for a number of days after that of the Lapland Longspurs had become less in evidence, possibly suggesting a later nesting period.

SNOW BUNTING (*Plectrophenax nivalis*).—Many were present in town on June 3. Later some were seen on the rocks near the Bay, but we found no positive evidence of nesting. A fair-sized flock was feeding on wheat near the elevator on July 22.

1. A paper dealing with our life history work on this species will appear elsewhere later.



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## RANGE EXTENSIONS FOR SOME CRUCIFERS\*

By HERBERT GROH



XTENSION of range may be actual, as it is with several of the more recently introduced weeds to be reported below; or it may represent merely more adequate knowledge of existing range of stabilized adventive, or of indigenous, species as in the case of the plant first to be noticed.

No attempt has been made to assemble all the information that might be had regarding Canadian distribution of these plants, but additional records for the Canadian Weed Survey of this Division will be always welcome. Only specimens in the National Herbarium at Ottawa (distinguished by the letters Can) and from the Division of Botany have been examined.

*Sisymbrium salsugineum* Pallas (*Arabidopsis glauca* Rydb. Fl. Rocky Mountains, p. 342, 1917).—Although ranging widely from Siberia, through Arctic North America to Montana and Idaho and apparently Colorado, this native crucifer is not often collected. Payson (Univ. Wyoming, Publ. Sc. 1: 1-27, 1922.) remarked that it "seems to have been collected but four times in North America," but did not mention the reference to Alberta occurrence on page 342 of Rydberg's *Flora*. This occurrence and that reported by Richardson (according to Hooker, *Flora Boreali-Americana*) from "shores of the Arctic Sea" can be extended considerably in

Canada now. The following specimens have been examined.

MANITOBA: Brookside, Winnipeg West, W. A. Burman, Aug. 25, 1900, bare spot, probably alkaline; Cartwright, W. A. Burman, no date on label.

SASKATCHEWAN: Parkbeg, J. Macoun, June 23, 1876, by a saline pool (Can); west of Saskatoon. J. Macoun, by a brackish lake (Can); Nokomis, H. Groh, July 8, 1935, alkaline depression.

ALBERTA: St. Albert, T. N. Willing, Oct. 1, 1899; prairie near Salt River, near Heart (Raup) Lake about 59° 41' N., 111° 56' W., Hugh M. Raup 2483, Aug. 20, 1928 (Can); near Mission Farm, about 59° 57' 30" N., 112° 17' W., Hugh M. Raup 2482, June 15, 1928 (Can).

BRITISH COLUMBIA: 2 miles north of Windermere, J. W. Eastham, July 14, 1939, dry ground probably with some alkali. These plants were from a few inches to less than a foot in height and all in flower and fruit.

Plants of this species are annual, glabrous and even glaucous, branching with spreading and somewhat sinuous stems, with entire leaves, mostly ovate, sessile and clasping. The inflorescence of rather inconspicuous white flowers elongates in fruit, which consists of slender pods less than an inch in length and containing minute brown seeds.

*Sisymbrium Loeselii* L. Loesel's Mustard.—At Kamloops, on July 21, 1939, this mustard was found apparently for the first time in British

\*Contribution No. 649 from the Division of Botany and Plant Pathology, Science Service, Dominion Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, Canada.





Grinnell, J and Palmer, Ralph S. 1941. "Notes on Bird-Life of Churchill, Manitoba." *The Canadian field-naturalist* 55(4), 49–54.

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